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 FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2653
 INFO RUEHQP/AMCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE 0673
 RUEHCR/AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE 0194
 RUEHCR/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR IMMEDIATE 9797
 RUEHLD/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 6619
 RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2082
 RUMJDK/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 5322
 BT
 C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 24672

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
 TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PK, US
 SUBJECT: CODEL NUNN AND THE REFERENDUM

1. (C) ENTIRE TEXT.

2. THE CODEL NUNN PRESS CONFERENCE HAS RECEIVED QUITE A BIT OF RETROSPECTIVE ATTENTION IN LIGHT OF PRESIDENT ZIA'S REFERENDUM ANNOUNCEMENT. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT AT THAT TIME SENATOR NUNN NOTED THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED WITH PRESIDENT ZIA THE LATTER'S ELECTION PLANS. DURING A RECENT TRIP THROUGH THE PUNJABI COUNTRYSIDE, EMBOFF & CONGEN LAHORE DPO FREQUENTLY HEARD THE ACCUSATION THAT THIS STATEMENT IMPLIED ENDORSEMENT OF ZIA'S PLANS FOR A REFERENDUM.

3. ALTHOUGH CODEL NUNN MET WITH THE PRESIDENT FOUR DAYS BEFORE THE REFERENDUM ANNOUNCEMENT, ZIA MADE NO MENTION OF HIS REFERENDUM PLANS. NO MATTER HOW COINCIDENTAL THE SUBSEQUENT TIMING OF ZIA'S ANNOUNCEMENT, THE PROXIMITY OF THE TWO EVENTS REINFORCES THE PERCEPTION AMONG MANY PAKISTANIS THAT ZIA IS THE USG'S MAN. HINTON
 END OF MESSAGE

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State Dept. review completed

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